receipt of their requests in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) For convenience of public, passport fee will be accepted in cash as well as by bank drafts at option of applicants.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The objective behind this is to make recognised travel agents more responsible for genuineness of documents submitted by them.

(e) and (f) The Government have liberalised certain procedures for expeditous issue of passports, details of which are given in the Statement. (Please refer to the Statement appended to the USQ 1593). However, the passport offices are not able to issue passports within the target time due to heavy increase in input applications, staff constraints and passports being written manually.

Shifting of Delhi Passport Office

1662. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Passport Office in Delhi has been working in a very limited space having no scope of cross ventilation in summer season;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Delhi Passport Office has been working on second floor of Shastri Bhawan without any provision of lift;

(c) whether Government are aware that aged applicants find it difficult to climb the stairs to reach Passport Office; and

(d) if so, wheher Government propose to shift Delhi Passport Office at some ground floor and airy building in central locality?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) to (d) The Passport Office in Delhi which is presently located on the second floor of Shastri Bhawan and where there is no provision for lift, is seriously short of space. Government are aware of a number of difficulties resulting from this, particularly inconvenience to applicants, including aged applicants who have to climb the stairs. It is accordingly proposed to shift the passport Office to a location where there is adequate space and which is convenient for applicants.

Simplification of Passports issuance Procedure

1663. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to ensure renewal and other miscellaneous work relating to passport are done within a week's time;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such move is to be implemented in near future;

(d) whether Government propose to take some other measures to ensure that seekers of passports are put to little inconvenience; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) to (c) Presently 14 Passport Offices are already renewing passports and rendering other miscellaneous services within a week's time. Seven other Passport Offices are not able to do this work within a week's time.

(d) and (e) The Government have liberalised procedures to facilitate expeditious issue of passport services. The details are given in the Statement (Please refer to the statement appended to the USQ 1593). A proposal to augment staff strength of the Passport Offices is also under consideration.